

(1998) TV Interview Eckhart Tolle about his book The Power of Now (Eckhart Tolle).mp4

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 1:03)

Hello, I'm Georgia Schachter Hill, and I want to welcome you to Living in Balance. Our subject today is about relationship and health, and we are going to look at it from the perspective of the power of now. Come join us.

Eckhart Tolle has been described as the modern mystic. He is the author of The Power of Now, and I've asked him if he would talk with us today about The Power of Now and how we can relate it on such a practical and important level as relationship, and also about our health and suffering. So that is the subject.

You are the author of this wonderful book that thousands of people have read, and also thousands of people have been drawn to come and listen to you talk. You are a guru to some, and you said, I liked your analogy, you're a window through which the light can shine.

[Speaker 1] (1:04 - 1:29)

Yes, people don't really come to see me, they come to see that which comes through this form. It's everybody's destiny to become a little bit more transparent to the light of consciousness shining through, and so people come to be more fully with themselves rather than come to see another person when they come to talks.

[Speaker 2] (1:30 - 1:57)

And I've asked you if we could concentrate on relationship. I just loved your information that you shared through The Power of Now about relationship. It puts it in such a perspective, and you mentioned it as relationship as practice in spirituality, or spiritual practice, how we can work with our relationships from that perspective.

And we have so many that are painful, so many that are addictive, and that have a negative aspect to them, but they don't have to be like that. They should not be.

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 2:54)

No, it seems that relationships are a great source of both pleasure and suffering for many people. And many people have experienced how easily the pleasure of a relationship can turn into suffering, and how quickly that can happen. How easily it seems that love can turn into hate in relationships.

It can happen within a second. And so there's a source of great suffering there for many people. Why is it that there's so much conflict in relationships, and does it have to be

that way?

So we need to look at what the source of that conflict may be. Now most people experience periodic drama in their relationships, once a week, every other day, depending on their relationship.

[Speaker 2] (2:55 - 3:05)

And we can become addicted to the drama itself. Because it is emotional, it is intense, we experience it. And even if it's painful, it's intense.

[Speaker 1] (3:05 - 4:04)

Yes. There is something that one could almost call an addiction to suffering in most human beings. But that's mostly unconscious, so they don't know that they are addicted to suffering.

And what that is, is not so much caused, it's seemingly caused by the relationship, but the fact is that human beings over thousands of years of history have created so much suffering for themselves. If you look at human history, you see the atrocities, the almost continuous warfare that's been going on. So that has left traces in the human collective consciousness, and those are residues of past human suffering.

Even the planet itself carries an energy field of suffering, collectively, in the collective psyche.

[Speaker 2] (4:04 - 4:09)

So we have inherited, through all these generations and ancestors, ancestry now, their suffering.

[Speaker 1] (4:09 - 6:27)

Yes, and I call that the pain body. So it's a residue of past emotional suffering, past, both the past of humanity, and your own personal past, because every child suffers in one way or another. So all the emotional suffering that you go to is added to the pain body, the emotional field of suffering that you've already come into this world with.

So this pain body, now I'm going to look at it for a moment as if it were almost an independent entity. It's an emotional energy field that lives in you, and the pain body is not always active. It has a dormant period when you can hardly feel it and everything seems to be fine, and then it has an active period when it needs to come up and feed again, add to its suffering by creating more suffering.

So this pain body that people carry inside from the past, past emotion, periodically comes out of its dormant state and seeks some further experience of suffering, because

that is the energy vibration that it feeds on. So the first thing that happens, a little trigger awakens the pain body. Something relatively insignificant happens, perhaps in your relationship.

Your partner says something, makes a comment, and suddenly there's an enormous reaction out of proportion to the significance of the triggering effect, and the pain body came up because it needed to feed. So the pain body feeds in two ways. It feeds on your mind by rising up into your thoughts and making your thought processes very negative.

They become negative and self-destructive, destructive of self or others. So every negative thought has a certain frequency vibration to it which corresponds to the emotional frequency of the pain body. And some pain bodies are predominantly angry pain bodies.

Other pain bodies are predominantly sad or extremely turbulent or fearful.

[Speaker 2] (6:28 - 6:35)

But we all know that pain body, and we know how it can come up, and it's disproportionate, as you said, to what has actually happened to us.

[Speaker 1] (6:35 - 6:35)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (6:35 - 6:37)

But we can dissolve the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (6:37 - 7:24)

Yes. Now, the pain body will try to feed, to add to its energy. It wants you to completely identify with that energy field that it represents, that it is.

So it will feed on your mind, but in relationships, it will also feed on reactions, your partner's reactions. It will unconsciously, of course, you don't know that when you're identified with it, you don't know that this is what you're doing. You will try to make your partner react in a certain way that feeds your pain body also by provoking anger, for example.

And it's done unconsciously, so the reaction, your partner's reaction, will be feeding your pain body. And that is what I call the need for drama in a relationship.

[Speaker 2] (7:25 - 7:35)

You know what I like about this, too, is once you think of this pain body as a separate entity, that you detach from it, and you literally then can detach from it?

[Speaker 1] (7:35 - 8:27)

Yes. When you know it is not you, it loses its personal nature. Kind of the pain that you experience periodically then becomes depersonalized.

It's no longer my pain, my identity, my painful story, but simply you know that it is human pain that lives in you. Because there's really nothing personal about these feelings. Anger is not a personal anger, it's human anger.

It's the same in every human being, the same feeling. Sadness is the same feeling of sadness. Fear is fear.

But people personalize it completely, so the emotion energizes and amplifies the mind-made sense of self, which then becomes a very fearful or angry one.

[Speaker 2] (8:27 - 8:51)

But you mentioned that women especially experience this because we really empathize with, we have that history of like the women of Afghanistan that had to wear the burqas and the way that women have been tortured because they're smaller and they've been raped and so forth. So part of that is part of this whole culture and the whole pain body of like the race.

[Speaker 1] (8:51 - 11:00)

Yes, there is a collective aspect to pain body in that sense that certain countries have a heavier collective pain body than other countries. And those tend to be countries where many atrocities or continuous warfare has happened. Eastern Europe, if you go to East European countries and sometimes Central European countries, you can often sense there's a certain heaviness in the energy field.

And that is a collective pain body. Another aspect of the collective pain body is that certain races who've suffered a lot also have accumulated a stronger collective pain body. And women who have been victims really for thousands of years also have a collective female pain body that I point, I talk about in the book that it tends to come up particularly before menstruation in women when there's suddenly great emotional turmoil.

And it can take you over so easily then you become totally identified with and you're forced to act it out again and again. On a monthly basis. Yes, not that men don't have a pain body.

They also have a pain body. But there's the collective aspect of the female pain body. So once you know that, then you can actually bring more presence into it and simply observe that movement, that turbulence or that heaviness inside you.

So it doesn't control your thinking anymore. You simply feel the turbulence or the heaviness inside you and watch it. So you bring a certain amount of presence to it.

And that is bringing the power of now into those emotions that are part of the human pain body. And that is the arising really of a new state, a deeper or higher state of consciousness that is not conditioned, that has the ability to simply witness what is taking place.

[Speaker 2] (11:01 - 11:02)

And that shifts that whole consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (11:02 - 11:27)

That shifts it and you're no longer feeding it. When you know that that's what it is, it's less likely that the pain body can move into your mind, force you to think certain thoughts, which of course will be negative. And it's also less likely that the pain body will make you use your partner to give you more pain in the need to reenact this drama.

[Speaker 2] (11:27 - 12:06)

Over and over, the drama. We will be back in just a moment with more of Eckhart Tolle and the power of now with your health. And if you are just joining us, I'm Georgia Shakti Hill and we're talking with Eckhart Tolle.

The power of now is his book and the practices that you can learn from the power of now can really assist you in becoming a healthy, balanced person. As you know, stress is what makes our lives so difficult and can bring on illness. One technique or practice that is so profound is surrender.

It even affects the aging process, does it not?

[Speaker 1] (12:06 - 13:43)

Yes. Surrender is acceptance of this moment as it is, because you realize the futility of that state of inner resistance to what is, to simply make this moment your friend rather than your enemy. And then you realize that perhaps for many years, the now, the present moment, you've treated it as an enemy, trying to get away from it, not liking it, constantly criticizing it.

So this transformation of no longer internally trying to escape from or deny the aliveness that is in this moment, that also brings about a transformation in the physical body, because a lot of the contraction that people sense, that which stops the healthy flow of life energy through the body, what is called qi, that which stops that is the state of fearful contraction that is there. And where does that originate? It's because you never embrace this moment as it is.

You mentally project yourself forward to some possible future moment, and in that gap between now and later, fear arises. The fear makes the body contract, and that greatly impedes the flow of life energy through the body.

[Speaker 2] (13:43 - 14:04)

You mentioned continue to say yes, say yes to life, say yes to now, say yes to what is going on. It really is a matter of acceptance. And going with kind of the flow of your life, and if you are in fear, then that's when the blockages come.

But the acceptance of the now, okay, so we accept it, we actually embrace it.

[Speaker 1] (14:05 - 14:53)

The now and life are one, because there is no life outside of now. So when you look at it, most people live in past and future, rarely in the now, so they live in a conceptualized universe, because now is all there ever is. Nothing ever happened in the past, it happened in the now.

Nothing will ever happen in the future, it will happen in the now. So when you realize how vital it is, then you open yourself up to an enormous power that is here all the time, that you cut yourself off from when you live in and through mental projections of past and, for many people, future mostly.

[Speaker 2] (14:53 - 15:09)

Now a lot of people will, oh, maybe they'll do astrology, or they'll do I Ching, or they'll do the Tarot, or they will do some form of divination. And is it because they really are not satisfied or not living in the now, and they're projecting into the future, they want to see what the future holds? Is it like a dissatisfaction with what is?

[Speaker 1] (15:10 - 15:32)

Well, they want to in some way perhaps control what is going to happen to them. They want to know. But of course, if you knew what is going to happen to you, your life would lose all sense of adventure.

Everything would be totally fixed. So simply, the most powerful spiritual practice is the practice of now.

[Speaker 2] (15:34 - 15:54)

Be in the moment, as the Sufi Master would say. That's why they dance, that's why they whirl. It brings you into the moment.

And there are practices that do that. Now some of the things, one thing that you

suggested was the inner body. And tell me about that and how people can come from the inner body and come into the now, be in the now.

[Speaker 1] (15:54 - 18:23)

Most people are cut off from the aliveness of their body because all their attention is absorbed continuously by thought processes. In other words, they're completely in the head. Their center of gravity, so to speak, is in the mind, in their continuous stream of thinking.

And what are they thinking about? Probably the next moment, the future. They're projecting themselves forward, trying to control it in some way, trying to prevent certain things from happening.

And so they lose themselves in the mind and in time, in future. So a very powerful practice is to bring your attention from the head into the body and to feel the aliveness that is always present throughout your entire body. And it can start with a simple thing like sensing the aliveness that is in your hand.

And at first, some people say, I can't feel anything. And I sometimes point out, yes, you can. Just close your eyes, hold up your right hand.

And without moving your hand and without looking at it, is there any way you can know whether your right hand is still there? And then they do that. And suddenly they can feel the energy in their right hand.

They can sense it. And they're beginning now to enter the body with their attention. And in the same way that you can feel the aliveness there, you can very easily feel the aliveness that is in the rest of the body and then sense it as a general flow of aliveness.

Every cell is alive. And that takes your attention away from the mind and also brings you into the now, because you cannot be inhabiting the body. It's one way of putting it, truly inhabiting the body.

When you inhabit the body, you cannot be away from the now. That is an anchor for staying present. And that is a state of great power, because we may not realize how much intelligence is actually, how much intelligence lives in the body and in every cell of the body.

If you had to control the workings of the body through your mind, the body would break down immediately because it's far too complex.

[Speaker 3] (18:24 - 18:24)

Oh, yes, yes.

[Speaker 1] (18:24 - 18:53)

Only the intelligence in the body, that is in every cell and in every organ, can make the body function in that way. So the greater intelligence that is there, the one intelligence that is there of which the human mind is only a tiny aspect, how to connect with that one intelligence that runs the entire universe, the easiest way to connect with that is to start by connecting it with, connecting with your inner body.

[Speaker 2] (18:54 - 19:12)

Now, many people are suffering with disease, and we know that through pain and through disease and trauma, we often do evolve. However, how can we transform illness and suffering? What can we do with the power of now to transform illness and suffering?

[Speaker 1] (19:12 - 21:35)

If illness is already there, see that you don't form an identity out of your illness. You don't make an identity out of it. You identify with it so much that the image forms in your mind of me as a person who has that, who is a sufferer of that, to simply bring it down to this moment and the reality of this moment.

So when I speak of surrendering to an illness, I'm not saying surrender to the fact that you are ill. That's a mental image. Simply surrender to whatever this moment presents, and that may be at this moment pain.

It may be disability. It may be discomfort. And an illness can become your spiritual teacher because it can teach you the state of surrender.

To say yes to what is. Not resist it. Enormous healing powers are released when you enter the state of non-resistance, which has nothing to do with resignation and saying, oh, I might as well accept I'm not going to get any better.

Give in to it. Nothing to do with that. It's simply accept the reality of this moment as it is without constructing a mental story on top of it.

Simply this. The pain is there. So let the pain teach you surrender.

That's how the egoic entity, the mind-made self, can actually become eroded through an illness. And it has happened. I have met people who have had severe disability, and there they were in their wheelchair, perhaps totally incapacitated.

And I looked into their eyes, and there was an enormous light shining through, an enormous aliveness. They had surrendered to their condition. And then I met others in the same condition.

There was great bitterness and anger and resentment. They had closed down. And so

healing is more likely to happen, much more likely to happen in the surrendered state.

[Speaker 2] (21:35 - 21:39)

Because that tenseness is gone, the anger, the harming your body.

[Speaker 1] (21:39 - 21:51)

All healing powers are released in the state of openness, that is the state of surrender. Because the state of non-surrender is the state of closeness, shutting down, contraction, tightness.

[Speaker 2] (21:52 - 21:59)

So the power of now can be that we can actually put ourselves in a healing state, being open to healing.

[Speaker 1] (21:59 - 22:19)

So the power of now is always connected with working with whatever is at this moment, not demanding that your life should be different, not being antagonistic towards the reality of this moment.

[Speaker 2] (22:20 - 22:20)

To surrender to the moment.

[Speaker 1] (22:21 - 22:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (22:21 - 23:11)

Thank you, Eckhart. If you would like to be in touch with Eckhart, and you know we always love to hear from you, stay tuned and we'll let you know how. And then we'll be back with a parting thought.

Living in this moment, accepting what is, can change our relationships, can change our health. Then we can truly live in balance in mind, body and spirit. Until next time, I'm Georgia Shakti Hill.

May you be well, happy and peaceful. And may you have the power of now.